

Current Topics

Wants the Items.

Dr. H. Finley Helms of Lincoln, Neb., who was sued by Miss Louise Lacey of Chicago for \$10,000 for breach of promise, was to have filed an answer last week in the District court, but instead he filed a motion asking that the plaintiff be required to be



DR. H. FINLEY HELMS.

more specific in her petition so far as it relates to a trousseau which she says she bought at a cost of \$500. The motion of Dr. Helms asks that the plaintiff be required to give an itemized statement showing the number and nature of each article in the trousseau and the cost of each. Miss Lacey was formerly a stenographer for Hibbard, Spencer, Bartlett & Co., of Chicago, but resigned her position to enter into a marriage contract.

The Hague Protests.

The report that the members of the arbitration tribunal of The Hague conference are to protest against Joseph Chamberlain's speech on the employment of Kaffirs against the Boers in South Africa is the first sign of life we have had from that quarter in a long time. It is timely. The discovery that Great Britain has been arming savages against the little remnant of the republican forces is the latest series of revolting revelations that have deprived her of the last spark of foreign sympathy.

It was agreed in the beginning on both sides that this was to be a white man's war. Had it been otherwise the Boers could have offered such inducements to the huge masses of savages enveloping the British settlements as would have turned them loose upon Cape Colony and Natal. The odds on a white basis are so tremendous against the little republics that the enlistment of Kaffirs against them appears peculiarly mean. Are not the 55,000,000 people of European blood in the British Empire enough to dispose of a quarter of a million Boers, without having to call in the black barbarians of Africa?—Chicago American.

Offers His Life.

Colorado Dairy Commissioner T. L. Monson volunteers to swallow or



T. L. MONSON.

otherwise take into his system the germs of animal tuberculosis to prove or disprove Dr. Koch's theory that the disease in cows and other animals is not communicable to humans. Mr. Monson believes in Dr. Koch's theory. He declares he is sincere in his offer, and makes only one provision—that his family must be given an annuity if the experiment proves fatal to him.

Newspapers as Educators.

Prof. W. H. Lynch, of Mountain Grove Academy, at Mountain Grove, Mo., is credited with reading more paid-for newspapers than any other man in the United States. He subscribes for 58 newspapers, six of them dailies. The professor says: "I use the newspapers in my classes. They are the best instrument in the world for teaching current history and geography. The real drama of life in its varied forms of commercial, political and social relations must be seen and learned through the mirror of the world, the newspaper. Every Friday morning in the academy is devoted to the reading of newspapers."

Barrows Favors Athletics.

Rev. J. H. Barrows of Oberlin believes that the "rage" for athletics will be overruled for good; that we'll form the outdoor habit and be the healthier for it. "If I had the ear of the leading business men of America," he says, "I would whisper in it as the wisest counsel I know to men over 50 years of age, 'Golf first and business afterward.' This means longer-lived, more successful, happier and better American citizens."

SAYINGS and DOINGS

How the French Twisted the British Lion's Tail.

The Pettit Bleu of Brussels publishes an open letter from the Belgian historian, Barral, to Edmond Rostand, the author of "L'Aiglon," which touches on a curious point of real or alleged history. Rostand's wife is a granddaughter of Marshal Gerard, who in 1832 led a French army through Belgium.

The object of this letter is to ascertain if Mme. Rostand has any papers of her grandfather which may throw light on the attack made by his troops on the British Lion, which stands on a hill at Waterloo. The French soldiers, it seems, endeavored to overthrow this insulting monument, and it was all that the marshal could do to prevent its destruction.

Now M. Barral has discovered that though the British Lion is still there, its tail has been sadly twisted, and he wants to know how and when. The tail, once borne proudly aloft, flamboyant and aggressive, now trails as limply and tamely as that of the harmless and necessary cat.

In the Brussels Museum is a plaster cast marked "Model of the Lion of Waterloo," and this has an erected tail, while the iron on the battle field has a drooping one.

According to M. Barral's account, the French soldiers broke off the lion's tail, which was subsequently replaced by a new one or by the old one in a new position.

M. Barral has also interrogated the proprietors of the Belgian foundry where the lion was cast about 1830. They state that the original model had an elevated tail, and feel quite certain that the cast was like unto it.

Fair Porto Rican Painter.

Miss Herminia Davila of Porto Rico has placed a portrait of Andrew Car-



HERMINIA DAVILA.

negle on exhibition in the Porto Rican section of the Pan-American. The portrait is done in black and white silk of such minute needlework that the effect is similar to steel engraving. The picture presents the head and shoulders of Mr. Carnegie, and is an exact reproduction of a photograph. The frame was also designed by Miss Davila, and she has embroidered many dainty pauses in the four white corners.

Speed of Locomotives Tested.

A locomotive on the New Jersey Central Railroad was recently tested with a train of nine coaches, and made over three miles at the rate of eighty-two miles per hour, and these performances can be repeated regularly. This is not to say, however, that the average rate of speed of American locomotives is over eighty miles per hour, for it is very much less, but it shows that they have a force in reserve which can be called on in emergencies to make up lost time. The only accurate data for comparing the performances of locomotives are what are technically called "train sheets."

These are official records compiled for the officers of the roads, in which "nothing is extenuated or ought set down in malice," and they show that, compared with foreign locomotives, our own are far ahead in all that constitutes efficiency, speed and economy.

A Rooster in Harness.

The Rev. Charles A. Long of the York (Pa.) German Baptist church, when not occupied with the duties of



his charge, finds diversion in the raising of fancy chickens. The pastor's pretty little 6-year-old daughter is very fond of her father's chickens, and she has displayed a peculiar ingenuity in taming and teaching a number of the fowls to perform tricks. Several of them follow her where she wills and are frequently her only playmates. One handsome Black Minorca rooster, harnessed to a wagon, takes a staid old hen for a carriage ride, with little iva manipulating the reins, as shown in the photograph. The same rooster and several others have been taught to play at see-saw, and they also have other accomplishments.

HOW MRS. CUMMINS WORRIED SENATOR GEAR.

A. B. Cummins, the nominee of the Iowa Republicans for governor, is in many ways a remarkable man. The story following, by one who was on the scene, shows another side of the Cummins family, says the Chicago Tribune:

"I was in Des Moines in the winter of 1894 when Cummins was a candidate for the United States Senate, to succeed that gritty old veteran in politics, John Henry Gear. There were six candidates, as I remember. Gear, of course, was the lion. Then there was another who had a big railroad influence. Then there was a plucky fighter, an editor from Sioux City. Another candidate called from Council Bluffs. He was the plain people's candidate, as he called himself. He used to help the farmers cut their hay, and so on. Then there was a man from the center of the state. He had long hair and was an impressive sort of fellow. The other man was Cummins. Tall, rather swarthy,



perfectly possessed when others were on the rampage, he was the one man whom foxy old Gear really feared. I was in Gear's room one night with his manager, young Blythe, a shrewd railroad lawyer. He had all the pins in their proper places and told old John Henry Gear to go to bed.

"Have you seen Cummins tonight?" asked the senator.

"The lawyer said he had not, but that Cummins' headquarters were dark and nobody was about."

"Then I stay up," said the wily old politician. "I don't go to bed until I know where Cummins is."

"His manager laughed and said he knew Cummins was at home—Cummins lives in Des Moines—and in bed."

"This did not satisfy John Henry Gear. 'He can plot as much mischief there, or more,' retorted Gear, 'than anywhere else. Do you know Mrs. Cummins?' The old man's manager said he knew her in a casual way."

"I know her the other way," said the old senator. 'She's the smartest woman in Iowa. I wish there was some way to get Cummins a w a y from home.'"

"This compliment for Mrs. Cummins, from a man like John Gear, meant a good deal. The old man, however, went to bed. The next day he summoned his manager and said: 'What did I tell you? Do you know what Cummins and his wife did last night? See here. Here's an invitation from Mrs. Cummins to me, to dine at her home this evening with the other candidates! That's Mrs. Cummins' work.'"

"Young J. W. Blythe asked if that wasn't all right. 'Nothing gives me greater pleasure,' said the lynx-eyed senator, 'than to be Mrs. Cummins' guest ordinarily. I honor her. But this finesse on her part is not according to the old way of political battling in this state. It's a sort of lace-handkerchief, kid-glove way of getting the enemy into a corner and smothering him with perfume.'"

"But you are going?" asked Blythe.

"Going? What else can I do? There's where she unarms me."

"The dinner was a pretty one, I was told. Mrs. Cummins went to the spread on the arm of the old senator. The other candidates were in their places. Not a word of politics was uttered. A few games, some music, and it was all over."

"John Henry Gear won in the caucus and was elected, of course, on joint ballot. All the candidates spoke after the caucus, but the clearest speech was that made by Cummins. And while he was talking old man Gear, radiant and bubbling, was assuring Mrs. Cummins of his admiration for her husband, and promised, so I was told, that when he finished the term for which he had just been nominated he would get out of the way for Cummins. But he didn't. In 1900 old John Henry capered as gayly into the field as a spring colt and won. If Cummins lives he will reach the senate. He is, in his peculiar way, one of the smoothest politicians in the country."

"Soddies" in Colorado.

Sod houses, or, as they are locally termed, "soddies," are now being built in large numbers in eastern Colorado. They are made of oblong pieces of sod cut from the prairie, about eighteen inches in length, seven inches broad, and from three to four inches thick. No foundation is required, the sods being simply laid on the prairie, and up goes the structure. "Soddies" are cool in summer and warm in winter, and when the snow-laden wind is whistling without a cozy sodhouse, in which there is a good corncob fire, is not to be despised.

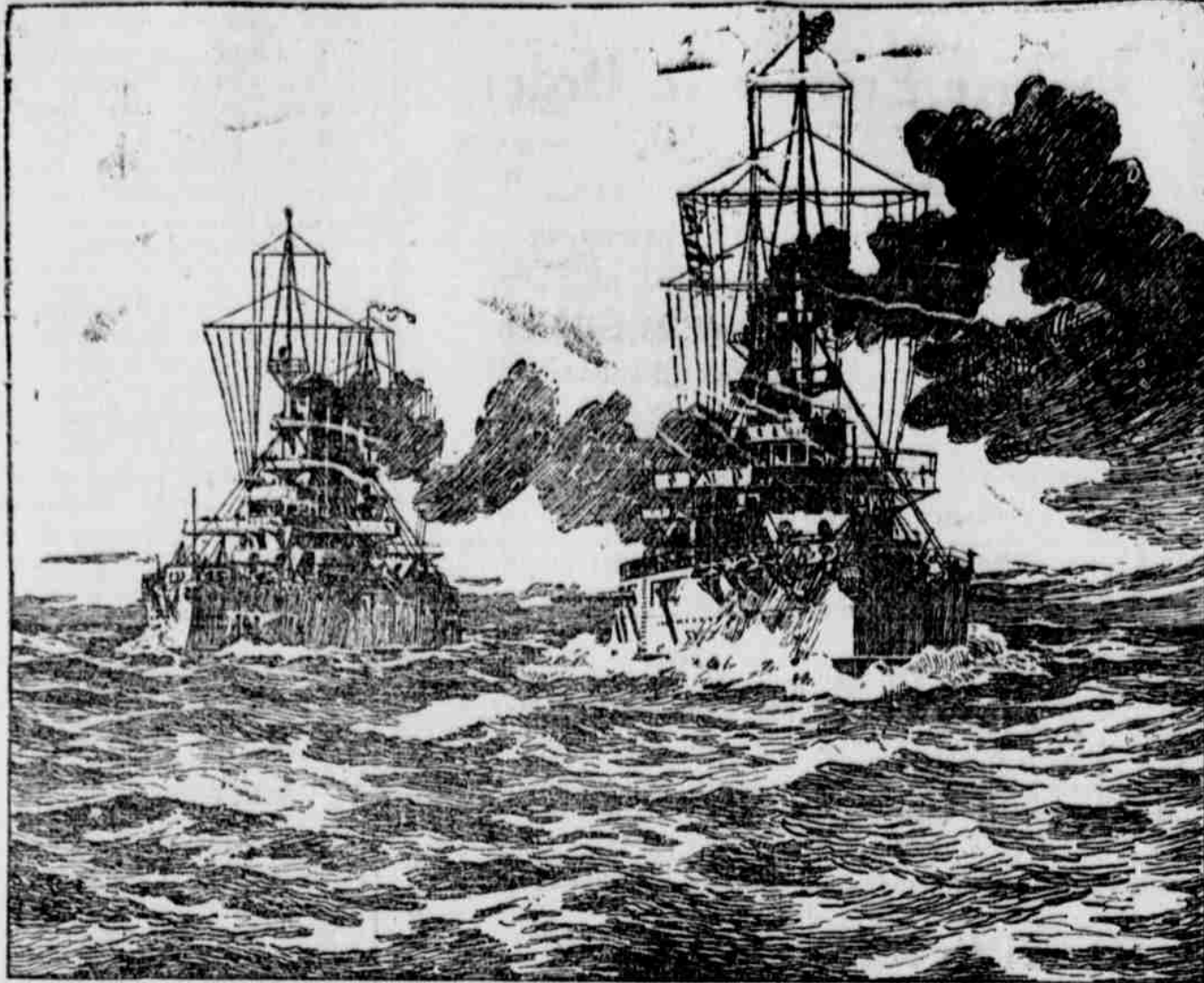
TROUBLE AT PANAMA.

The battleships Iowa and Wisconsin were ordered from Puget Sound to San Diego last week from which the former will sail for Panama, where disturbances of a serious nature have been taking place. The invasion in Venezuela by so-called Colombian troops may bring about an international crisis. It is believed in Venezuela that the troops are not being paid by the Colombian Republic at all,

but that they are filibusters from British Guiana and Honduras who are paid by those governments. It is evident that some such belief also prevails in the State department at Washington, otherwise the two greatest fighting machines in our navy would not be ordered to be in readiness.

We already have several small gunboats close to the scene of hostilities.

These could take care of American interests in an ordinary emergency. They include the Ranger, which has a main battery of six 4-inch rapid-fire guns and a secondary battery of four 6-pounders, and a Colt gun. She has a complement of 21 officers and 127 men and is in command of Commander Wells L. Field. She is now at Panama. The Machias has by this time arrived at Colon on the Atlantic side.



THE BATTLESHIPS IOWA AND WISCONSIN.

Boston Murder Mystery.

Though the woman whose headless body was some time ago found in the Chelmsford woods of Massachusetts has been positively identified, by a set of false teeth, as Mrs. Margaret Reilly Blondin, only one little part of the great murder mystery is solved. Even the time of the murder is uncertain; the place where it was done is unknown. An unbroken chain of facts point to Joseph Wilfred Blondin, the victim's husband, as the murderer, but he is at large.

All the tell-tale exhibits in this remarkable case have now been got together by the state and city police in Boston in the hopes of throwing some new light on the time, place and circumstances of the murder, which may lead to the solution of the mystery and the capture of the criminal.

The Motive Found.

The motive for the Blondin crime is still a matter of speculation. It may have been a desire on the part of the miserly husband to get hold of the \$100 which his wife had saved before her marriage and then be rid of her. He had another wife at St. Polycarpe, Canada, a much handsomer woman than Margaret Reilly. He wanted to go back to Canada to get a position on a St. Lawrence river steambot, which his father had lately found for him. He would hardly have dared to take back a second wife, as he would quickly have been prosecuted for bigamy.

By a strange coincidence the discovery that the body found in the Chelmsford woods was that of Mrs. Blondin was not communicated to the Boston police until after it had been printed in the morning papers. So Blondin read of how his secret was out hours before the same papers came to the eyes of the police. He at once left Boston and took a train to New York. This is evident from the fact that next day the baggage master at Fall River received a letter from "James Marrou," New York, which read:

Dear Sir: Would you please send my bicycle and my trunk to New York station; you find the check in this letter and send me check to this address.

New York. JAMES MARROU.

Chief Watts, head of the Boston Detective bureau, and Chief Wade of the State police had already found the trunk at Fall River to be Blondin's without a doubt. It was sent on to New York in the hopes of catching the owner when he should call to claim it. By June 13, when the trunk and letter containing checks should have arrived in New York, such a sensation had been aroused about the murder that Blondin, alias Marrou, was too wily to apply for either letter or trunk.

Knives Are Blood-Stained.

This trunk is now in Boston at police station No. 3. When opened it was found to contain four butcher knives, stained with what is apparently human blood, though an effort had been made to wash them clean. The trunk also contains Blondin's marriage certificate to Margaret Reilly.

The most careful examination of the room where the Blondins lived failed to show any trace of blood on the floor, walls or on any article in the room. There was no evidence of any struggle, such as broken furniture. There is a theory that Blondin may have choked his wife to death and let her body lie till the blood had almost ceased to flow, then cut off the head, put the body in the trunk and so disposed of it in the Chelmsford woods. The grips in which Mrs. Blondin's head and

shoes are thought to have been carried have already been found and are held as a part of the state's evidence.

Description of Blondin.

Blondin has such a singular looking face that he should be easy to recognize anywhere. He has a strong, protruding jaw, a slight cast in the right eye; his face is slightly pock-marked and he is very bow-legged. This latter is perhaps his most marked characteristic. Were it not for these peculiarities of face and limbs he would be hard to pick out, for he is slightly less than medium size—five feet six inches—weighs 150 pounds and usually wears only the conventional moustache. He is 33 years of age. He has a tattoo mark of a schooner on his left forearm. He speaks with a slight French accent.

The Massachusetts police announce that they are upon the trail of Blondin. After the police lost the clue to Blondin in New York city they took it up again in Canada, from where



BLONDIN'S METHOD OF DISPOSING OF WIFE'S BODY.

Blondin originally came. The police now announce that their man has been tracked to the wild regions in the extreme northern part of the Province of Quebec. No effort will be spared to catch him. The objective point of the fugitive is said to be the town of Perce, near Cape Gaspe. From that point he easily can make his way to the French settlement of Miquelon, where he absolutely will be safe among his old associates, the outlaws and smugglers of St. Pierre.

The Population of Canada.

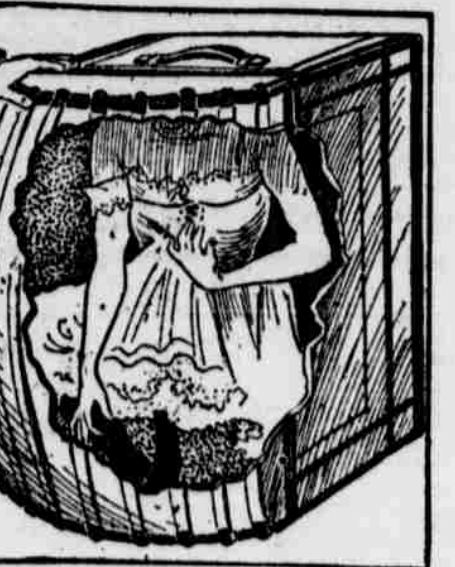
The present population of Canada is 5,400,000. There has been a gain of 600,000 in ten years. This is the same gain as that of Chicago during the last decade. Ten years ago the population of the Dominion was one-thirtieth that of the United States. It is less than one-fourteenth now.

It is natural that there should be disappointment in Canada over this slow growth. There is no doubt that the ease with which land could be had in the United States for a nominal price drew many emigrants here. The Canadians have hoped that when the

supply of cultivable government lands was exhausted the tide of emigration might set their way. But while this country has no longer free lands to offer, it has work to offer, usually at good wages. There are so many more opportunities to earn money here than in the Dominion that there were living in this country in 1890 nearly 1,000,000 men and women who were born in Canada. The census returns of nativities for 1900 have not been made public yet. When they are it will become apparent, no doubt, that the emigration from the Dominion to the United States has not been checked.

"Belled Buzzard" Returns.

The "belled buzzard" has returned once more to Boone County, Mo. Such has been the rumor, and it was positively verified by C. S. Ballew of Harg, Mo., six miles east of Columbia, who saw the great bird at close view. The belled buzzard has been famous in Boone County for more years than men can remember. It has a bell fastened to its throat, and has a small iron band also. Sometimes many years elapse between the parting and the coming of the bird, but it never fails to return. The buzzard had been given up for dead this time, and the drought-stricken farmers were even puzzled when they heard a tinkling in the sky and saw the grim bird soaring, but when the bell flashed in the sunlight they knew that the old-time visitor had come again. This may be the last visit of the famous bird, for



it is very old. Mr. Ballew said that the buzzard had turned gray. It seemed weary and sluggish, and apparently indifferent when he approached, and did not fly until he had a good view of the bell, the origin of which is unknown. There is something sinister in the arrival at this time of the strange visitor, which, perhaps, has seen the dawning of two centuries, and people talk about the bird at times with a touch of superstition.

The Nation Divorce Case.

Mr. Nation's suit for divorce has brought the confession from Mrs. Nation that her love for David was a fleeting fancy. She only thought she loved him when she married him twenty-five years ago, and now she says that, although he isn't a bad fellow, he is too slow for her. The husband's complaint is that the wife has abandoned him and caused him worry and humiliation by her saloon-smashing crusade. He says that he has been patient with her and tried to persuade her to return home, but that she has treated his overtures with contempt.